CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED
2003

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

2 June 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with His Excellency, Erik Boheman, Swedish Ambassador to the United States

1. At the request of the DCI conveyed by DD/P, the undersigned called at the Swedish Embassy at 1600 hours 1 June to discuss with the Ambassador the interrogation of the captain and crew of the Swedish motor vessel ALFHEM, which called at Key West for this purpose on 28 May 1954.

2. The Ambassador was very affable and explained that his entire interest in the case was merely curiosity since the owners had voluntarily ordered their ship into United States territorial waters and his Government was not directly concerned in any way.

3. I described briefly the boarding of the ship in Key West and the complete cooperation which Captain Lind had given us, including the photostating of his logs, charter papers, etc., and his patient assistance in the preparation of his signed statement.

4. I made it clear to the Ambassador that Captain Lind had firmly insisted all through the interrogation that he had no knowledge of the true nature of his cargo, and he did not feel that it was any responsibility of his to question the manifest. On this point, the Ambassador commented that this was the typical attitude of a sea captain, particularly when serving as master of a tramp vessel like the ALFHEM.

5. The Ambassador also pointed out that no Swedish laws or regulations were violated when a Swedish vessel took a cargo of arms from one foreign port to another foreign port anywhere in the world without bringing them into Swedish territorial waters. (Query: Did the owner visit the ship on the outward voyage at Copenhagen in order to keep the arms out of Swedish waters ?)

6. The Ambassador then brought in from another office a three-page memorandum written in Swedish which he had received from the Foreign Office in Stockholm summarizing the statements made by Swen Albert Christensen, the sole director of A/B Navigation, the charterer of the ALFHEM. The Ambassador ran through the memorandum for my benefit in English. It was principally concerned with Christensen's statements to his Government protesting his innocence and ignorance of the true nature of this cargo. Two points, however, did appear

significant

significant. One was that the real principal behind the whole deal was located in England, but Christensen refused to reveal his identity. (See paragraph 7. below). The second point of interest was that Christensen had run afoul of the Swedish currency controls because for purposes of obtaining foreign exchange he had given the Dutch West Indies as the ship's ultimate destination and not Guatemala. It seemed to me that this was a further example of the deceit and conspiracy involved in the case.

7. Our review of the memorandum was quite sketchy and it is not entirely clear to the undersigned whether it was the real charterer behind Christensen or the real shipper who was located in England. I asked the Ambassador if he was going to provide a translation of his report to the Department of State, which he said he was not going to do. However, he did indicate that if his friend, the Director, wanted to study it, he would be very glad to turn it over to him, but would have to ask that the contents not be used against Christensen in any way.

8. I mentioned that the A/B Navigation was registered as a shipping and chartering company on 22 January 1954 with a minimum capital of KR 5,000, to which the Ambassador replied that it was obvious to him that the company had been set up solely for the purpose of handling this shipment.

9. The entire discussion was most friendly and I told the Ambassador I would let him know if we had any further developments. I did not show him any of the signed statements made by the captain or members of the crew or any of the other documents.

[redacted]
Chief
Economic Warfare

C-PP/ECON, [redacted]